Gandhiji on Ramayan and Gitai

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(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)
Editor: K. G. MASHRUWALA

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VINOBA ON HINDUSTANI

[Shri Vinoba was invited to address the gathering at the opening of the Hindustani classes of the New Delhi Ladies' Club by Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya on 20-4-'48. The following is a summary of his speech on the occasion.]

Shri Vinoba said that he could not resist the invitation because of his great love for the South Indian languages. He had attempted to study all the four South Indian languages when he was detained at the Vellore Central Jail. He believed that for the unity of India it was as necessary for the people of North India to study a South Indian language as it was for those of South India to study Hindustani. He got the opportunity at Vellore. He discovered that all the four South Indian languages were beautiful and rich and not in the least behind any of the North Indian languages such as, Hindi, Bengali, etc. On the contrary, in certain respects they were richer than the Northern languages. The roots of their verbs had great potentialities. Moreover, by adding such terminations as *inchu isu*, etc. to Sanskrit words they could add innumerable verbs to their languages. This had made these languages both rich and sweet. Tamil itself meant *amrita* (nectar), and Telugu meant *sweet as honey*. Indeed, it was sweet. So also were the Kannada and the Malayalam.

He found at Delhi that it was the ladies who took more interest in learning Hindi than the gentlemen. He had the same experience in Madras. It was just as it could be expected. Men were not capable of protecting their culture in the same way as women. He was, therefore, glad that ladies had taken a lead in this matter.

At the Vellore Central Jail there were detenus from all the four Dravidian provinces. But they did not understand one another's language, nor did they care to know it. They carried on their inter-provincial conversation through English. The South Indian languages are so similar to one another that a Tamilian would be able to learn Malayalam in a week if he willed. There was not much difference between Tamil and Kannada also. There was some difference between Telugu and Tamil, but a Tamilian could easily learn Telugu within a month. But the pity was, they did not care. It was then that he realized how essential it was to have our own national language.

From ancient times, *Bharatkhanda* (India) has been considered one single country stretching from the seas to the Himalayas. Even in those times there were numerous provincial languages and so it was found necessary to have a national language. Sanskrit supplied the want. Sanskrit meant "language for the propagation of culture" and Prakrit meant the language which *Prakriti*, that is the common folk spoke. Shankaracharya wrote his works in Sanskrit from nationalist considerations. If he had written them in Malayalam, it was possible that he could have served his neighbours to a larger degree, but he wanted to bring about a revolution in thought throughout India, and so he wrote in Sanskrit in an easily understandable style.

Sanskrit could not become the national language of India today, although he was aware that Dr. Kailasnath Katju had put forth that suggestion. Shri Vinoba said that he could understand Dr. Katju's point of view, but he was of opinion that the work amongst the masses could not be done through Sanskrit, and so the only language which could become the national language was Hindustani. It was so because 15 to 20 crores of people understood it. It was at times suggested that Bengali should become the national language, as it was very rich in literature. Shri Vinoba admitted that Bengali was richer in literature than Hindustani. Yet it could not become the national language because it was not understood by the people outside Bengal. It was not correct to say that Gandhiji caused Hindustani to be the national language of India. The *fakirs* and *sadhus* who travelled throughout India spoke Hindustani and they had made it the popular common language of India. It was the natural common language throughout the provinces and Gandhiji had simply given recognition to that fact.

Then there was also the controversy about Hindi and Hindustani. Shri Vinoba thought that it was a futile controversy. If people created controversies even from suggestions which sought to unite the people, then they cut at the very root of unity. Shri Vinoba considered that those who favoured Hindi did the same work which he desired provided they made it simple Hindi. He would say the same thing with regard to Urdu. Simple Hindi and simple Urdu were hardly different from each other, and that was Hindustani. He failed to understand why there should be so much quarrel about words. If he went to the Punjab, he would naturally use more Urdu words in speaking to the people there. If he used the word *kafi* in South India, perhaps the people there might understand it as 'coffee'. If he said *bus*, they might think that he was speaking of a 'motor-bus'. So he would have to use the word *paryapt* (पर्याप्त) there. As long as there was a common grammar, common syntax and the same verbs, it was the same language even if styles differed.

So he urged them to give up these quarrels. For the South Indians he would not insist even upon any particular script. He would tell them that they should

learn Hindi in their own script and after learning the language they might learn as many scripts as they could. It would be easier work then. Thus he himself had no quarrel either with the Hindi or the Urdu schools. He believed both of them to be doing good work. Shri Vinoba said that he would tell the propagandists of each school that while he possessed a large vocabulary of words taken from Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian and other languages, they possessed not more than half of it, as they confined themselves to only a few of them. So his language was an ocean and theirs were rivers. Why should the ocean quarrel with the rivers when it knows that all the rivers were bound to come to it? In the same way, all the Hindi and Urdu words would enrich Hindustani. He reserved to himself the right of using such word as he thought proper on a particular occasion.

He would advise the ladies not to get involved in these controversies. Gandhiji had said that women were better advocates of non-violence. Men had created all the quarrels of the world. It was their — women's — duty to bring an end to these quarrels. If the women took a lead in this matter they would spread culture all over India.

(Translated from the original report in Hindustani by D. D.*)*

RESOLUTIONS PASSED BY THE ALL INDIA BASIC EDUCATION CONFERENCE AT PATNA

RESOLUTION I

The meeting of the Fourth All India Basic Education Conference places on record its deep sense of grief and irreparable loss at the death of the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi. He led us to our freedom. We pledge ourselves to that unfinished task. Among the many items of Constructive National work with which Bapu sought to lead India to a new life, *Nai Talim* has a special significance. It is the foundation on which he sought to raise the grand and beautiful edifice of a Free India. We, who had the privilege of being associated with him in this great enterprise, pledge ourselves today to apply all our energies to the task with added devotion and keep the following ever in view:

1. To infuse the spirit of Truth and Non-violence in education;

2. To correlate education with the physical and social environment and the craft activity of education;

3. To inculcate, through education, the virtues of truthfulness, patriotism and human sympathy and to fight sectionalism in all its forms;

4. To make suitable provision for *Nai Talim* in all stages from childhood to old age.

5. To prepare the young and the adult for a new order of society in which co-operation shall prevail instead of competition, justice shall rule and not aggression, freedom will be accompanied by responsibility; and in which economic and moral progress shall go hand in hand.

RESOLUTION II

The Conference places on record its appreciation of the good work done in Bihar in the field of basic education and the systematic manner in which it had been organized. It expresses the hope that the scope of basic education will now be quickly expanded so that all primary schools may be converted into basic schools at an early date.

RESOLUTION III

This Conference urges provinces and States which have not yet made a beginning with basic education to take it up seriously without delay and to utilize in this connection the useful experience gained in the rest of the country during the last ten years.

RESOLUTION IV

The Conference is definitely of the opinion that any attempt to reduce the period of seven years prescribed for basic education is educationally unsound and should be resisted. Apart from the fact that permanent literacy cannot be achieved within a short period, it is impossible to realize the objectives of social and civic education before the child is at least 14 years old.

RESOLUTION V

The Conference emphasizes the necessity of paying attention to the production of literature and other educative material for the use of teachers and pupils of basic schools in every province. It is also necessary that there should be in every province a few experimental schools fully equipped with teachers and necessary equipment for carrying on research work in the field of basic education. It would be the duty of these schools to devise methods whereby their work might get properly recorded and the results of their researches be brought together and be made available to all people working in the field of basic education. It is also necessary that every province should organize a small *Sangh* entirely devoted to the study of the problems of basic education.

RESOLUTION VI

In the opinion of the Conference time has now arrived when adult education should be carried on in an intense manner with a definite programme. In the absence of sound adult education it will be impossible for the people to understand the implications of democracy and to fulfil the responsibilities of a free people.

In this connection the Conference draws the attention of provincial Governments to the scheme of adult education prepared by the Hindustani Talimi Sangh and the fundamental principles underlying that scheme. Governments should give up the routine method of spreading mere literacy amongst adults and adopt a scheme for the full development of man by providing education through the production of necessities of life with the co-operation of adults themselves and thereby drawing out their latent capacities.

RESOLUTION VII

The Conference recommends that all training centres and colleges for basic teachers should be organized as real live communities where life and

work are organized according to the ideology underlying basic education which aims at the establishment of democratic and equalitarian social order in which distinctions of caste and creed and colour have no place and inter-communal harmony is practically and actively encouraged.

RESOLUTION VIII

Every centre of *Nai Talim* should make it a point of studying child life and do practical work in the field of child psychology in the particular setting of our country.

RESOLUTION IX

Whereas basic education is the foundation of national regeneration and the bond for uniting all the different sections of the nation, the Conference is of opinion that this system of education should be immediately started amongst those backward classes known as *Adivasis*. The Bihar Government has done well in giving a lead in this matter.

This section has till now been free from the evils of the so-called modern education, and in the opinion of the Conference basic education will be fully successful amongst them and their life will receive a lustre, of which they have been deprived for several centuries last, on account of our neglect of them.

Along with a copy of the above resolutions I have also received a copy of the minutes of a meeting of the Hindustani Talimi Sangh held at Patna on 17-4-'48. It appears from the minutes that the Sangh has resolved to help the Kalika Camp at Delhi and the Gurgaon Camp in the East Punjab by undertaking to open basic schools in those camps.

There is also a reference to the finances of the Sangh. During all these years Gandhiji had supplied all the funds necessary for carrying on the activities of the Sangh, so that the Sangh was free from all financial worries. It has been resolved that all the work should be carried on as before and be further developed as necessary. As the establishment of the Hindustani Talimi Sangh was made under a resolution of the Congress, the Secretary of the Sangh has been authorized to correspond with the President of the Congress for the future maintenance of the Sangh.

It was also resolved that post-basic education which had already commenced in Sevagram should be continued and further developed and the following occupations should be organized as media of post-basic education.

1. Agriculture, cattle-breeding and occupations such as manufacture of paper, *gur*, etc.
2. Weaving;
3. Carpentry and metal work;
4. House building;
5. Domestic occupations, particularly for girls;
6. Health and sanitation;
7. Training of teachers.

Students who have passed the basic education course would be admitted into this school.

Wardha, 3-5-'48 K. G. MASHRUWALA

VINOBA IN JAMIA MILIA ISLAMIA

Shri Vinoba visited the Jamia Milia Islamia (Muslim National University) of Delhi on 12th April, 1948 and gave a talk which is briefly summarized below.

At the outset he expressed his pleasure that he was able to visit the Institution. He had longed to visit it and even to pass a few days in it ever since his first acquaintance with Dr. Zakir Hussain in 1937 when he had had the privilege of working with him for drawing up the Basic Education Report. Dr. Zakir Hussain's high character and clear thinking had made a great impression on him and he was ever anxious to come into intimate touch with this Institution. He remembered it particularly when he wanted to study the *Quran* in the original Arabic. But he could not leave Wardha and so he had to manage the study with such local help as he could get.

Though, Shri Vinoba said, he had not been physically with them, still he always believed himself to be one of them because he considered the *Nai Talim* mission to be his own. From his childhood onwards, he had always regarded himself a life-long student. He had passed in the jails about five years in total. He used to devote the greater part of his time there learning the different languages of India. Whenever he sat among children or talked to them he often wished to be as young as they. But science has not yet found the method of returning to one's past age and appearance.

He had always advised students to do some teaching work also along with their studies. When he was at school he used to teach mathematics to his co-students. They used to put their problems before him and he helped them in solving them. Even at this period, in spite of various other activities, he generally managed to devote some time to teaching. If he could not do so on a day, he felt as if he had gone without food. In his opinion, teaching was a method of learning. "Knowledge doubles itself by giving," was a famous saying. It was so with money also, though he knew that people thought otherwise. But money also increased by giving and decreased by keeping it to oneself. The *Quran* had said somewhere to the effect that wealth increased not by interest but by gift. People must pass on the money which they get to others as quickly as possible. In a football play, the game could proceed only if the player kicked the ball towards another as soon as it approached him. If a player took it into his head to keep the ball to himself, the play would not proceed. In the same way, he said, "pass on your money and your knowledge to others; thereby both will increase."

Crores of people are illiterate in India. When they thought of educating them there were placed before the people fifty years' schemes involving an expenditure of hundreds of crores of rupees. But, Shri Vinoba asked, why should it be so? Why should not every one who knew something pass on that knowledge to another? If the people did that, within a few days illiteracy and ignorance would disappear from the country. The teacher ought not to feel that he was teaching. He should feel that while he was teaching he was learning something. This he asserted from his own experience. He had found that he had gained more

knowledge from young children than he had given them. He looked upon them as his masters and they looked upon him as theirs. In this way both the pupils and the teacher become mutual masters and disciples.

If the students of Jamia Milia Islamia were to learn that trick, they would be rendering a great service to the country, he concluded. D. D.

HARIJAN

May 16 **1948**

GANDHIJI ON RAMAYAN AND GITAI

[Referring to the discussion on the *Language of Prayer* I have been supplied by the Manager of the Sevagram Ashram a copy of a Gujarati letter by Gandhiji to Shri Vinoba. The letter refers to two subjects — the first, evidently, is in reply to an enquiry from Vinobaji himself about the principles kept in view by Gandhiji in preparing an abridged edition of the *Ramayan* of Tulsidas, and the second part refers to the circumstances under which Gandhiji substituted *Gitai* for the *Gita* in the Ashram prayers. The first portion is not absolutely relevant to the present discussion and may it be noted at once that there is no such publication as Gandhiji's edition of the *Tulsi Ramayan*; but the reading of that book at the Sevagram Ashram is confined to the parts selected by Gandhiji. Nevertheless the whole letter is published for its importance. —K. G. M.]

Se(vagram), 18-8-'45

**Chi(ranjiva)* Vinoba,

..... I shall look into the *Nai Talim* matter. Ashadevi is not here at present.

TULSI RAMAYAN

I have not a full copy of the *Ramayan* as abridged by me but I send you a marked copy of the *Ramayan* from which you will be able to know the principles on which I have worked. As far as possible I have tried to retain the historical or narrative portion unbroken. Some of the interpolations are useful by themselves, but still I have dropped them altogether. I have also dropped any matter which had been over-lengthened as also such portions as appeared to me unnecessary for the narrative. I have also generally removed portions where woman is referred to in derogatory terms. But I have kept some portions of it just to indicate the mind of Tulsidas. So far as I can remember immediately, these are the principles I have worked upon. But you are intelligent enough to discover any other principle not mentioned here from the marks in the book.

GITA AND GITAI

Failure has compelled me to do what I was not prepared to do by persuasion. I mean that I have commenced from yesterday the recitation of *Gitai* in place of the Sanskrit *Gita*. I realized that nobody learnt Sanskrit. The same old members are there, but even they do not or are unable to study Sanskrit even to the extent of understanding the *Gita*. Moreover, they were unable to recite it in chorus, and what pained me more was the fact that though the recitation of the whole of the *Gita* was confined to the morning prayer, still some members walked out as soon as the recitation began. On making an enquiry into the cause of this, I found that it was very trivial. I did not know it before. I found it out only the day before yesterday, and I immediately came to the conclusion that perhaps interest in the *Gita* might be created more quickly if it was recited in Hindi, Marathi or Gujarati, since the people would understand its meaning more easily. I have commenced with *Gitai* because Marathi holds the place of prominence in this part. So far as the members attending the morning prayer are concerned, they are so few that it would not matter much which language I chose. But the music of *Gitai* has been felt by me to be very sweet. May be, the reason for this is that I have heard it several times recited by Shivaji and I have liked it. Kishorlal's (Gujarati) translation is there, but I have not yet been able to assimilate its music. I have not heard anyone reciting it in a sweet tone. I got an opportunity of hearing it at Bardoli but it was insufficient, and my ear could not adapt itself to it. Haribhau has published the *Hindi Gita* recently. But I have not yet been able even to examine it and so did not like to touch it. Therefore, I have commenced with *Gitai*.

The immediate cause for writing this is that I happened to perceive Shivaji yesterday. If he is going to stay here for some time, it would please me if he can be induced to give at least a week to the Ashram just now during the period of the commencement of this recitation. He can train those who desire in reciting it in the same manner as he does, and pick up his music.

Blessings from Bapu

* *Chiranjiva* — literally: May you live long; a mode of address by an elder to a younger member in intimate relationship.

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THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE

The following appeal has been addressed by the Maharashtra Rashtra Bhasha Sabha, Poona, to the President and Members of the Constituent Assembly.

"The considered opinion of the Maharashtra Rashtra Bhasha Sabha on the question of the National or more appropriately the Federal Language for the Dominion of India Government is stated below:

(i) The Sabha is emphatically of the opinion that in the respective provinces for all purposes except the Federal, the well-established provincial language like Marathi, Gujarati, Kannada, Tamil, Telugu, Bengali, etc. alone be used as a rule.

(ii) In the Federal sphere there must be a Federal language to displace English in use at present.

(iii) Such a Federal language in some form suited to the age did, in the opinion of the Sabha, prevail in the India of the pre-British period, as without such a common medium public intercourse would become non-existent, a presumption at variance with both fact and common sense.

(iv) This common or Federal language of old was the language commonly associated with the Madhya Desh (Central India). This same language came later to be known as *Kharī Boli*. This common language was evolved from the older forms of what is at present loosely called 'Hindi', as modified in varying degrees in different parts of India by the local languages as also the Court language (Persian) and language of the *Quran* and the *Shariat* (Arabic). It was really this language which came to be popularly known by the term 'Hindustani' or *Indostan* as designated by the Catholic missionaries in the Moghul Empire of Akbar and Jehangir.

(v) Our aim should be to revive and enlarge and develop the same old source and nucleus namely, Hindustani, with such additions and alterations as the requirements of the modern age demand for the purposes of the Federal Government and the general inter-provincial intercourse and co-operation.

(vi) It is obvious that such a Federal language should in its scope be wide and extensive, in its form simple and elastic and in its spirit inclusive, so that the larger majority of the people of our land should comprehend and handle it with ease.

(vii) The Sabha wishes to emphasize that no artificial blend with precise percentage of words like the one between Hindi and Urdu as proposed in some quarters would serve our purpose. Simplicity and easy intelligibility should be the tests and not any arbitrary mathematical proportion.

(viii) The Sabha would also like to caution our legislators against being swayed with the idea of raising any of the provincial languages to the status of a Federal language, as such a course is bound to fail as utterly impracticable and unnatural; it also means a logical death to the provincial languages sought to be fostered.

(ix) The Sabha considers it essential that all Federal laws, rules, orders and notifications shall as a rule be published in the respective provincial languages for provincial use, and followed therein through the authorized translation thereof.

(x) As regards the script, the majority of the scripts in use at present in the Dominion such as Hindi, Bengali, Marathi, Gujarati etc. are all essentially *Devanagari* in this or that form. Hence in the opinion of the Sabha the principal recognized script should be some form of *Devanagari*. For occasional or additional purposes and uses other scripts such as the Roman or Arabic may be used as required for the limited purpose in view. For instance, the Sabha imagines that the adoption of the Roman script would greatly ease the work of our Dominion Government in the international sphere.

(xi) (a) The Sabha as explained above, therefore, prays that the Federal language be preferably called *Hindustani* and that the principal Federal script to be adopted should be *Devanagari*.

(b) It also prays that the working knowledge of the Federal language and its script be made compulsory throughout our schools, including the upper primary, in order to facilitate inter-provincial contacts, commerce, and co-operation."

The appeal is over the signatures of Mahamahopadhyaya Prof. D. V. Potdar the President, Shri Vasantrao Nayak the Vice-president and four other office bearers of the Sabha.

I endorse the views expressed in the appeal except that I go a little further than what is suggested in clauses (x) and (xi) above in respect of scripts. My view on the question of scripts is as follows:

1. The official scripts of the Government of India should be *Devanagari*, *Urdu* and standardized Roman and the public should be at liberty to send any communication to any of the offices and departments under its control in any of the above scripts.

2. The Government of India should as soon as convenient take steps to perfect and standardize Roman script so that it should be possible to communicate in it the sounds of the various Indian languages as exactly and unmistakably as possible and also to transmit them telegraphically. Such standardized Roman script alone should be used officially in the country in the spelling of Indian words if that script is employed.

3. Official scripts of a State (i. e. unit of the Union) should be such Indian scripts as are recognized by its Government and the standardized Roman script so that within that State any communication may be made to any of its offices or departments either in a recognized provincial script or the standardized Roman script irrespective of the language employed, and all Government and semi-Government publications, signboards, communications, etc. whether in any of the recognized languages of the State or in Hindustani should be both in the recognized provincial script or scripts and the Standardized Roman script. That is to say for instance, if a notice

has to be published in Hindustani, in Tamilnad it should be published in the Tamil and Roman scripts, in Andhra in Telugu and Roman scripts, and in Karnatak in Kannada and Roman scripts and a communication may be addressed to public offices in Karnatak in the Kannada or Hindustani language written either in the Kannada or the Roman script.

It might strike the reader strange that I should from the columns of the *Harijan* suggest the use of the Roman script for transcribing Indian languages. I confess that it is a departure from Gandhiji's views on the subject of the scripts. I have more than once discussed this subject in other journals. This article would become too long if I were to discuss it here again at length. But if it becomes essential, I shall place my points before the readers of the *Harijan* at some future date.

Wardha, 28-4-'48 K. G. MASHRUWALA

A RICH ELEMENT OF ALL THE EARTH

[Many and marvellous are the tributes that have been paid to Gandhiji in foreign countries. There is no doubt that in a world yearning for peace all eyes were turned towards the one person who through long years of self-suffering had shown mankind the way to peace. The way is so hard and fraught with such sacrifice that it is difficult for persons without the faith and power of sacrifice which were Gandhiji's crowning glory to follow that path. Nevertheless deep down in the hearts of all men, if they will only be big enough to acknowledge it, does lie the belief that what he said was right. The following is a tribute from a Canadian who had never met him. So full of understanding is it that I feel it will bear publication in the *Harijan*. It was an address delivered by this friend at a Service held on the 15th February, 1948 in honour of Gandhiji.

New Delhi, 9-4-'48 — A. K.]

We are met to pay honour to the memory of one whose passing is mourned by the whole world of men. I doubt whether, in our time, any death would be so lamented by so many people in so many lands. Certainly, no loss would seem so grievous and so intimate to so many humble people throughout the earth.

I can think of only one other martyrdom that in a much smaller world sent so sharp a pang of sorrow through men's heart. The seed of that sorrow also has multiplied a hundredfold. For it did not fall upon stony ground. It was the sorrowing for Abraham Lincoln.

We have all read in recent days of the moving pageant of the grief of India as the ashes of her son were cast into the Ganges on their way to the great oceans that cleanse the shores of all islands and all continents. And as I have read, I have recalled (as many others have recalled) that other martyrdom, and the last journey of Abraham Lincoln from New York to Springfield. For seventeen hundred miles, by day and night, his fellow citizens (and by their side the invisible presence of millions of men of other races) stood in silent homage as the train bore him homeward in the triumph of his sacrifice.

It was recorded by one who wrote of his life and death, that the people, the nameless masses, the millions who had counted him great, warm and lovable, gave to that funeral procession "the dignity and authority of a sun darkened by a vast migration of birds — they gave it the colour and heave of the sea which is the mother of tears — they lent to it the colour of the land, the earth which is the bread-giver of life and the quiet tomb of all mankind."

As my mind has turned to the scenes where men wept for Gandhiji by the banks of the sacred river, I have often thought of those words written of another man who also looked at the world with the eyes of pity.

Who can say how many men have been ennobled and uplifted by the look in those eyes and the memory of that face?

Now I suppose that the features of Mahatma Gandhi, his spare ascetic form, his dress, the simple purity of his life, the power which seemed to be rooted in the sheer goodness of his character, were known wherever the family of mankind has set its dwelling place.

Although he lived in a far off land, he seemed in some strange way to be known to each one of us. He was a part of our world. I never knew the pleasure of seeing him or listening to him. I have read books about him, speeches that he has made and wisdom that he has written. I have talked to many men who knew him and had spoken with him.

They were sometimes in disagreement and impatience with his ways and thoughts. All were agreed, however, that he was a great man, that there was true saintliness in his humility, in his wistful humour, in his abounding charity, in his faith that there was "a value immeasurable and eternal in the humblest of human lives."

I remember attending a conference in London during the war, at which General Smuts was speaking.

Someone asked him a question which seemed to be unduly and unfairly critical of Mahatma Gandhi.

General Smuts, who long ago had many troublesome difficulties with the Indian patriot in his old South African days, gave the answer which so many men of many races have given. "I consider Mr. Gandhi one of the greatest and noblest men in the world. He deserves the homage of us all."

There is surely not in modern history, nor perhaps in all history, a more romantic and heartening story than the record of this man's pilgrimage.

Born into one of the more lowly Hindu castes, he became the saintly leader of the Brahmana and the Untouchable.

Seeking knowledge along the hard road of poverty and sacrifice, he became one of the world's wisest and most eloquent philosophers. A little lawyer, without privilege and without influence, he became a prophet of the eternal truths that justify God's ways to man. A man of peace, he became one of the greatest warriors for freedom. A man of another faith than ours, he was often hailed as the greatest Christian of us all. Despised sometimes, by many if by foolish men, for his colour and his creed, persecuted for his opinions, he stood forth in a world torn by hate as the apostle of charity and the great Evangelist of the love of brothers and the unity of mankind.

One lonely man in a teeming continent held by an alien power (and let us not forget how repentant that power was of past sins, how benevolent of intention, how honourably anxious and at its best to end an ancient injustice) on that continent he lived and died to see his people rising in the panoply of a new freedom and a new strength and bringing their precious gifts to the nations of the world.

And all this because in a world of goods and possessions and lusts and ambitions he dared to proclaim the things of the spirit, because in a welter of hate he preached and practised the power of love, because in the encirclement of terror he knew no fear, because in the midst of the temptation of luxury and the enchantments of the flesh he remained simple in life and pure in heart. In the words of the old Greek philosopher, sublimity was the echo of his great soul.

Many great and good things have come from the East to cleanse men's hearts and to bless our common heritage — but no greater example than this fact; to be a hero in India a man need not be a general or a statesman, a man of power or of riches. Above all he must be a thinker, a philosopher, a teacher, a saint.

The way to the heart of India is the path of poverty and self-denial. Much has been written and much more will be written of this man's apostolic succession in that noble tradition of India's sanctity.

The desires of his life seem to have been to end the discords of his own land, to raise the position and influence of the women of India, to improve the social and economic standard of the so-called Untouchables, and thus of all Indians, to bridge the differences between races and creeds (believing that truth is like a precious jewel — it has many facets), to teach to his countrymen and the world the folly and wickedness of violence, to restore the dignity of the labour of men's hands and to lead his motherland to the blessings of freedom and her rulers by gentle but firm persuasion to its willing surrender.

His life accomplished many of these things. His death will accomplish still more. That at least is the faith of his disciples and we are all (are we not?) in some degree his disciples.

Subject no doubt to many human frailties but overcoming them so often with his indomitable will, Gandhi sought to obtain the good as he saw it, strove for it, by a willing servitude to his conception of absolute truth, by a rare purity of life and living, by his insistence (sometimes criticized by us) on the stupidity of meeting violence with violence; by that humility which is so often the conquering sign of true greatness and above all by faith in God and the coming of His Kingdom.

> "I have no desire for the perishable kingdom of the earth," he said. "I am striving for the Kingdom of Salvation which is spiritual deliverance. For me the road to Salvation is through incessant toil in the service of my country and of humanity. I want to identify myself with everything that lives. I want to live at peace with both friend and foe. So my patriotism is for me a stage on my journey to the land of eternal freedom and understanding."

Gandhi was surely one of those who "ever in his right hand carried gentle peace to silence envious tongues." Perhaps that is why so many millions of humble men and women in a war-riven world revere his name and memory.

His daily prayer was,

> Lead me from Untruth to Truth.
> Lead me from Darkness to Light.
> Lead me from Death to Immortality.

That prayer has been answered.

One who knew him well said that "to be true, to be simple, to be pure and gentle of heart, to remain cheerful and contented in sorrow and in danger, to live life and not to fear death, to serve the spirit and not to be haunted by the 'spirits of the dead' nothing better has ever been taught or lived since the world began."

It is right that we should honour the memory of such a man. And I hope it is fitting also that an ordinary Canadian like myself should offer a wreath of maple leaves in his immortal memory.

For Canada is also a land of many races, of many reconciliations, of many mercies. We too love peace and long for justice and goodwill between men and men and nation and nation. We have welcomed and do welcome with our hearts Mahatma Gandhi's great Motherland into the community of free peoples.

We join her citizens here and everywhere in the mourning for her noblest son.

> "He does not die who can bequeath
> Some influence to the land he knows;
> Who dares persistent interwreath
> Love permanent with the wild hedgerows;
> He does not die but still remains
> Substantiate with his darling plains."

And although Gandhi is substantiate with his darling plains, he is in very truth a part of the fabric of our freedom, a rich element of all the earth.

Salvation has always been born of agony. And every day out of the East comes the light.

Let it be our hope and faith that the glow of the funeral pyre on the banks of the Great River may throughout the ages help to guide the feet of all men along the ways of peace.

NOTICE

Residents of Delhi will please note that the office of our Delhi branch has been shifted to New Delhi. All the *Harijan* weeklies : the *Harijan* (English), the *Harijansevak* (Hindustani in both the scripts), and the *Harijanbandhu* (Gujarati) are available at the office at

Navajivan Karyalaya (Branch),
U. S. Communication Theatre Building,
Room No. 26, 27, 27A,
Opposite Air India, Connaught Place,
New Delhi

LEST WE FORGET

V

THE NATIONAL WEEK

The 6th and the 13th of April are never-to-be-forgotten days in our national life. The 6th of April 1919 witnessed an unparalleled demonstration in which Hindus, Musalmans and others joined freely. It was too a day of freedom for the suppressed classes. That day laid the foundation for true swadeshi. And it was the day when the whole country offered civil disobedience. The spirit of mass freedom and mass resistance was abroad.

The 13th of April witnessed the Jallianwala massacre in which Hindu, Musalman and Sikh blood mingled in one scarlet stream. A dung heap was turned in a day into a place of political pilgrimage for all India. It will remain that till India lives . . . .

The week is pre-eminently one of self-purification and self-introspection. It is my fixed conviction . . . that we shall not make this unhappy land happy except by purity of conduct which spelt otherwise means truth and non-violence. Such purity can come only by prayer and fasting. I therefore suggest to those who believe in prayer and fasting to devote the 6th and the 13th to that sacred purpose.

. . . . We cannot proclaim . . . . the unity of Hindus and Non-Hindus . . . That question must therefore for the time being be left to work itself out.

Hindus have the impurity of untouchability to remove. They can fraternize with Harijans, set apart what they can spare for the relief of distress among them, and in a variety of ways make them feel that they are no longer the despised class among Hindus.

Hindu-Muslim Unity, Khadi and removal of untouchability are to me the foundation for Swaraj. On that firm foundation it is possible to erect a structure nobler than which the world has not seen. Anything without that foundation will be like a building built on sand.

Khadi alone lends itself to mass demonstration and mass effort. It is the platform on which all can work hand in hand. Sales can be organized. Voluntary spinning can be pushed. It is open to local workers to devise various ways of celebrating the national week. I can only think of things in which millions can take part and which can promote Swaraj. I can think of nothing else that satisfies all the conditions so well as the spinning wheel.

Oh that we can do one thing truly and well . . . The spinning wheel is the one thing in which men, women, boys and girls of all classes can work. It is the one thing that can establish a link between the rich and the poor, and it is the one thing that can bring a ray of sunshine into the dark and dilapidated dungeon of the half-starved peasantry. . .

(This section is based on two articles by Gandhiji in *Young India* of March 18, 1926 and of April 2, 1925. V. G. D.)

WHAT MUST BE UNIVERSAL

The *Janmabhoomi* and the *Vandemataram*, two of the Gujarati dailies of Bombay, in their issue of 1st May, published the following news item in a prominent manner:

> An assistant of a firm was carrying two bundles of rupees ten thousand each for being deposited in his master's bank. He lost one on the way but realized the loss only after reaching the bank. He immediately returned to his master's office and reported the loss. The master suspected him of sharp practice and handed him over to the police. At the same time he advertised the loss in local newspapers.
>
> Fortunately, one Lalshankar Kanji came by the bundle. He also noticed the advertisement, and immediately went to the owner and handed it over to him. Needless to say the assistant who was handed over to the police was immediately set free.

The above papers gave prominent place to this account in appreciation of the honesty of Shri Lalshankar. It was right that they did so. But at the same time let it be remembered that it is also an indication of the fact that the virtue of honesty has become so rare that what must be so universal in society that Shri Lalshankar's act should cause no surprise but it should be a matter of surprise and regret if a man failed to act so, the act requires to be broadcast in this manner. The level of civilization has fallen so low that honest behaviour appears like an oasis in a desert.

A Gujarati psalm says, "That men make room for women on the way and that nobody touches a thing belonging to another happens, when God has descended upon earth." The purport is that when woman ceases to have any fear of molestation from man and there is absolute honesty in all dealings, they would be indications of the approach of God's kingdom upon earth.

If we will, every one of us can be as honest as Shri Lalshankar and take share in the establishment of Sarvodaya Samaj.

3-5-'48 K. G. MASHRUWALA

Correction

In the *Harijan* of 11-4-'48 p. 62, column 1, in the last line of the article, for *Sindhu*, please read *Jaladhi*.

Wardha, 6-5-'48 K. G. M.

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